



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

May 30, 2000

Dear Set-top Box Manufacturers and Other Interested Parties:

Attached is the ENERGY STAR⁷ Set-top Box Final Specification (Version 4.0) for industry review. The changes reflected in the final specification were made primarily in response to the May 3, 2000 letter from the Electronic Industries Alliance/Consumer Electronics Association (EIA/CEA). The EIA/CEA comments were divided into three sections: Standby Power Levels, Maintain Program Equity, and Multifunction Devices. EPA's response to each issue is addressed below.

- **Standby Power Levels** EPA respectfully disagrees with EIA/CEA that the standby/low-power mode levels of 3 Watts and 15 Watts are "generally still too low." The purpose of establishing ENERGY STAR levels is to recognize the most energy-efficient products on the market. While some interested manufacturers may not have any current products that would qualify for the label, EPA believes that the two-year timeframe it has provided for product redesign is sufficient. As in the other Home Electronics Programs, a company has two years after signing a Partnership Agreement to ensure that the ENERGY STAR label appears directly on at least one ENERGY STAR compliant set-top box model.

EPA concurs with industry that it's very difficult to predict what the set-top box market will look like in three years since it is developing and changing so rapidly. Nonetheless, EPA has provided a Tier 2 specification to serve as an "energy-efficiency roadmap" for manufacturers. As the Tier 2 effective date nears, EPA will evaluate the specification and entertain alterations to the specification and product classifications, as appropriate.

- **Maintain Program Equity:** One of the tenets of the ENERGY STAR philosophy is to develop energy-efficiency guidelines that are non-proprietary and technology neutral. ENERGY STAR has no interest in promoting an unfair marketplace advantage for one manufacturer or product category. To that end, EPA intentionally developed the specification such that satellite TV set-top boxes and digital cable TV set-top boxes were required to meet the same energy-efficiency target. However, EPA has since learned that the 15-Watt specification may be very difficult for dual LNB satellite TV set-top box models to meet. The final specification allows models sold with a dual LNB and one receiver to qualify at 20 Watts or less and models sold with a dual LNB and two receivers to qualify at 30 Watts or less.
- **Multifunction Devices** Similar to industry's proposal, a new category for multifunction devices with a specification of 20 Watts or less has been developed for the final specification. EPA strongly believes that one specification of 20 Watts or less is preferable to the 50% allowance proposal made by EIA/CEA because it will be easier to administer and potentially less confusing to consumers and retailers.

While EPA will entertain additional constructive comments from industry, it is important to note that the agency is committed to finalizing the Program this summer and beginning preparations for the launch in January 2001 at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES). Any company that joins the Program between now and the 2001 CES will be eligible to participate in all promotional and marketing activities at CES, irrespective of whether the company has qualified products.



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT The next step in the program development process is for EPA to circulate a draft Partnership Agreement with the set-top box specification included. This Agreement will differ from the traditional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) because EPA is overhauling its MOU process; however, the ENERGY STAR Program's guiding principles will remain the same. The purpose of this change is to create a consistent, concise, and yet flexible document that can be easily implemented across the ENERGY STAR Programs. Prior to issuing the final Set-top Box Agreement, EPA will circulate a draft Partnership Agreement in three to four weeks for industry review and comment. (To see an example of a traditional MOU, please go to http://www.epa.gov/appdstar/home_electronics/products.html.)

Thank you in advance for taking the time to review this final specification. For more information about ENERGY STAR and specifically the Set-top Box Program, please visit our Web site at www.energystar.gov and click on "Products in Development." You also can contact me directly by phone (202-564-1251), fax (202-565-6674), or e-mail (<mailto:hershberg.craig@epa.gov>).

Regards,

Craig Hershberg
EPA Program Manager
ENERGY STAR Home Electronics

Enclosure